

OCTOBER 15, 1990

## CONCRETE SOLUTIONS



*The Storefront for Art and Architecture, a nonprofit gallery at 97 Kenmare Street, recently sponsored a competition seeking hypothetical suggestions for reusing twelve obsolete underground Atlas-missile silos that are scattered across upstate New York and northwestern Vermont. The concrete-lined silos reach as much as a hundred and seventy-four feet deep and fifty-two feet in diameter. They were finished during the Cuban missile crisis, in 1962; were capable of launching strikes on cities six thousand miles away; and were abandoned three years later, when the Titan II missile supplanted the Atlas. Now filled with stagnant water, they testify to the mad pitch of the Cold War.*

*The competition's twenty-seven winning proposals, models, and videos, on view at the Storefront until October 13, include schemes to transform the silos into poetry libraries, parking garages, giant musical instruments, prisons for belligerent world leaders, hydroponic gardens, chapels, mushroom farms, launching pads for research satellites, solar-power plants, and cesspools. The zaniest, and yet somehow most plausible, plan calls for a "Nuclear Heritage Park" to link the twelve sites. Designed by Pearson Post Industries Defense Entertainment Technology (actually the artists Joshua Pearson and Gardner Post) and by Nuclear Recycling Consultants (actually the artist Jay Critchley), this mutant Disney World would offer, according to its kaleidoscopic video description, displays of weapons systems "collected from all around the world"; missile rides "up, up, and away, for a spectacular splashdown in Lake Champlain!"; a night-club replica of the Pentagon's War Room; and simulator booths where you can "experience the thrills of high-tech warfare."*

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## Storefront International Competition :

### Project Atlas

ストアフロント国際デザイン・コンペティション  
ミサイル基地「アトラス計画」応募案募集

ストア・フロント主催の国際デザイン・コンペティション「アトラス計画」が行われる。これはニューヨーク州プラッツバーグ空軍基地近くに残るアトラス・ミサイル基地の発射装置と地下格納庫を、新たに公共の用途に合わせて開発する計画を募集する。個人、グループ、分野を問わず広範囲の人を対象に行われる。

この基地は最初のアメリカ大陸間弾道弾アトラス・システムを格納するために作られ、わずか30箇月で閉鎖された、技術進歩への人類の信仰の残片である。この計画の趣旨はかつての軍拡競争が逆行し軍縮情勢となった世界の現状を反映させることである。技術進歩の結果として変遷してきた文化を、一つのデッド・テックとなったアトラス基地を通して建築とアートの分野で批判的な見地から再考することを目指している。

提出締切り：1990年6月15日

参加費用：1作品10ドル（1990年6月1日締切り）

入選作品は9月3日から10月3日、ストアフロントで展示され、その後各国で展覧会が開かれる。展覧会カタログには入選作品がコメント付きで掲載され参加者に配布される。詳細は文末の連絡先に問合せのこと。■

Project Atlas is an international competition organized by Storefront For Art and Architecture, open to the participation of individual artists, architects and groups of interested people in any field. Twelve obsolete and abandoned Atlas missile bases remain in the region surrounding Plattsburg Air Force base, at the edge of Lake Champlain and the Adirondack Mountains, in New York State. The bases were designed to house the Atlas system, the first of a series of American Inter Continental Ballistic Missile weapons, capable of delivering a nuclear warhead at a distance of approximately 6,000 miles. The bases were operational for only 30 months, from 1962, when they were completed, to 1965 when there were deactivated in favor of a more advanced missile system. Each underground site consists of a steel and concrete silo 174 feet deep and 52 feet in diameter, connected through an access tunnel to a circular, two-story, subterranean control center. In the bucolic landscape, the sites seem to have been left by an alien civilization. They are monuments to our age, projecting comparable mystery to works such as Stonehenge and the great Pyramids. In their present uselessness, they are singular remnants of human faith in the advancement of progress and technology. The same Atlas rocket put the first American in space,

John Glenn; A technological paradigm of the first degree. Concurrently, with its speed and long-range capability, the Atlas ICBM became the first true instrument of global war. This required extremely complex guidance and electronic communication systems. The missile guidance systems perceive and coordinate to the Earth's magnetic field, rotation and the location of sun, moon and stars. This high speed transmission and elaboration of information involved a global network that quickly reduced our planetary conception to the true Global Village.

Project Atlas is a competition seeking to go beyond the creation of innovative designs for new and public uses of the abandoned Atlas missile bases in the North East. If today the arms race seems to have reversed its course, aiming towards disarmament, the 12 abandoned bases serve as metaphor for future issues. Are the silos monuments to a time we have left behind, or will they remain precursors to an empty world. How can communities whose main support comes from the military industrial complex survive in times of de-militarization? The intent of Project Atlas is to interpret the contradictions and enigmas of our age, at the beginning of a new decade and on the threshold of a new millennium: like a mirror, the project aims to reflect and reverse a reality. The project touches some of the most crucial issues in regard to our culture, industrialization and modernism, specifically challenging the formalistic truth and universal beauty embedded in pure forms and functions.

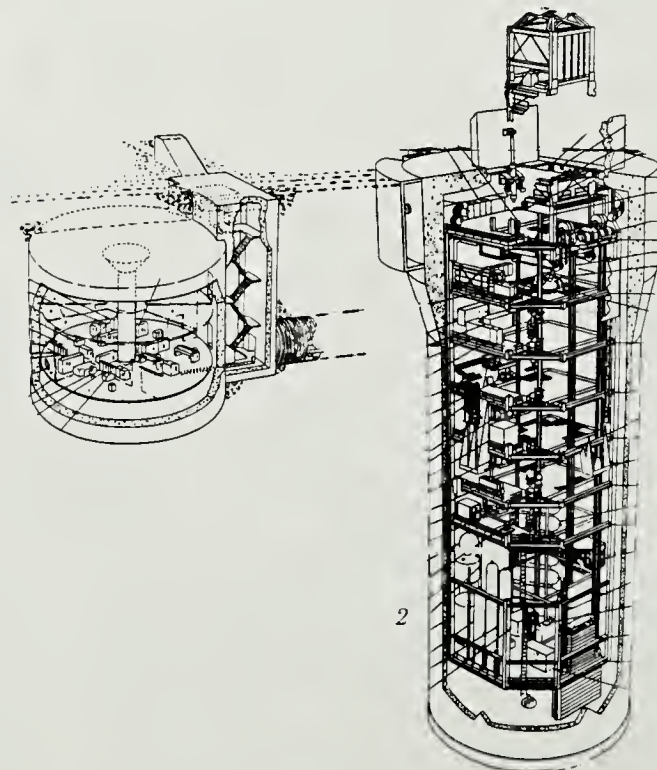
Project Atlas is both an action in the present about the transition of time from the past to the future and a present subject for the transformation of culture from the past to the future. It is time now to acknowledge that this century is over and the past can only be of service for a critical re-examination of how culture has transformed as a direct result of technology. The forum for this re-examination in the case of Project Atlas is in the specific realm of art and architecture. The subject of this project, the Atlas Missile bases, is of our past and should be properly utilized as an instrument to gain critical review of our cultural past. Thereby this project, as present endeavor, is a transitional effort toward a cultural projection into our future, immediately toward the next century and patiently toward the next millennium, through an attempt to transform a cultural emblem of our past into a prediction about our future by a simultaneous act of critical review and creative proposition.

We welcome any proposition and/or ideas in the form of drawings, models, text, concepts or actions. Deadline for entries will be June 15, 1990. The proposals selected by an international jury will be exhibited at Storefront, in New York City, September 13–October 13, 1990. Media and presentation requirements will be open: two dimensional work should be no larger than 6 square feet and three dimensional work should limit volume to 1 cubic foot. An entry fee of \$10 will be required by June 1, 1990 for each proposal submitted. Selected entries, texts and Jurors' comments will be published in a catalog to be issued in concurrence with the Storefront exhibition. Entrants will receive a copy of the catalog. Arrangements are being made for a national and international tour of the exhibition.

**For further information, please contact:**  
Storefront For Art And Architecture  
97 Kenmare Street NY NY 10012  
(212) 431-5795 ■



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1—アトラス・ミサイル基地。

2—断面パース。

1—Atlas Missile bases.

2—Perspective section.

All materials by courtesy of Storefront.



# North Country Living

An Adirondack Lifestyle Guide

July 26, 1990

## Abandoned and obsolete Atlas missile silos subject of Elizabethtown museum exhibit

By SUZANNE  
TAYLOR-MILLER  
*Associate editor*

ELIZABETHTOWN—Twelve obsolete and abandoned Atlas missile bases will be the topic of an exhibit July 28-Aug. 16 at the Adirondack Center Museum, Court Street, Elizabethtown.

The Atlas sites remain in the North Country at the edge of Lake Champlain and the Adirondack Mountains. Seven of New York's sites are within the Adirondack Mountains: AuSable Forks, Chazy Lake, Clayburg, Harrigan Corners, Lewis, Sugarbush, and Willsboro.

The exhibit is known as Project Atlas and began as an international competition organized by Storefront for Art and Architecture based in New York City.

According to Mary Bell, the exhibit will encompass the very best projects from all over the world. "The director of Storefront for Art and Architecture happened by an abandoned missile site fenced off with signs around it in Lewis and came up with the idea of a contest," she explained.

The contest began this past spring and participants were asked to think about a future use for the abandoned and obsolete sites. Nearly 150 designs were submitted from around the world and the Elizabethtown museum will exhibit about 30 of the entries.

The contest was open to individual artists, architects, and groups in any field.

"The missiles are out now but we're left with large, expensive holes in the ground," Bell said. "This project enables us to examine possibilities for their use."

Project Atlas Director Kyong Park explained the bases were designed to house the Atlas system, the first of a series of

American Intercontinental Ballistic Missile weapons, capable of delivering a nuclear warhead at approximately 6,000 miles.

"The bases were operational for only 30 months," explained Kyong, "from 1962, when they were completed, to 1965 when they were deactivated in favor of a more advanced missile system."

Each underground site consists of a steel and concrete silo that descends about eight stories underground and is 52 feet in diameter, said Kyong. The silo is connected through an access tunnel to a circular, two-story, subterranean control center, he added.

Douglas Wolfe is a station manager at Whiteface Mountain's research center. He is employed by the State University of New York at Albany's Atmospheric Sciences Research Center on the mountain.

"SUNY acquired two of the missile sites, the one in Lewis and the one in AuSable Forks," explained Wolfe, who contends the sites cost \$22 million each to construct in the 1960s. "At that time, the construction of these sites was one of the largest employers in the area, enabling about 700 people to work," Wolfe said.

The Atlas rocket was a liquid fuel rocket that the military scrapped when further technological advancements were made, said Wolfe. "There was a time where we (the research department) had

a mobile radar unit parked in one of the sites and I went in it because the power to our radar unit was underground in the site. It's a great science fiction place because of the underground location," Wolfe said, adding he believes Project Atlas is a worth while endeavor. "When something cost \$22 million to build nearly 30 years ago, it's worth trying to find a use for it," he said.

Describing the project, Kyong believes the competition "seeks to go beyond the creation of innovative designs for new and public uses of the abandoned Atlas missile bases in the Northeast. If today the arms race seems to have reversed its course, aiming toward disarmament, the 12 abandoned bases serve as a metaphor for future issues," Kyong said. "The real intent of the project is to interpret the contradictions and enigmas of our age, at the beginning of a new decade and on the threshold of a new millennium. Like a mirror, the project aims to reflect and reverse a reality. The project," continued Kyong, "touches some of the most crucial issues in regard to our culture, industrialization, and modernism, specifically challenging the formalistic truth and universal beauty embedded in pure forms and functions."

For more information on the exhibit, call the Adirondack Center Museum at 873-6466.



PAGE A-4  
SUNDAY, JULY 29, 1990

## Project Atlas cites new ideas

### Use sought for 12 abandoned missile silos

By DAYLE DERMATIS  
Staff Writer

ELIZABETHTOWN — Society often dictates that things deemed "obsolete" be made over or destroyed. The 12 abandoned Atlas missile sites in the region around Plattsburgh Air Force Base seemed destined to remain abandoned and eventually forgotten.

Myong Park, founder and director of Storefront for Art and Architecture, has attempted to change the future of the sites. Project Atlas encouraged architects and artists to look at the Atlas missile bases and consider how they may be transformed for future use.

Although the ideas may never become reality, Project Atlas has ensured that the silos will not soon be forgotten.

"They are the inverse of typical monuments: they (do not) mark what (has not) happened," said Jean-Marc Ablarius and Christopher Burns in the text accompanying their project entry (see sidebar).

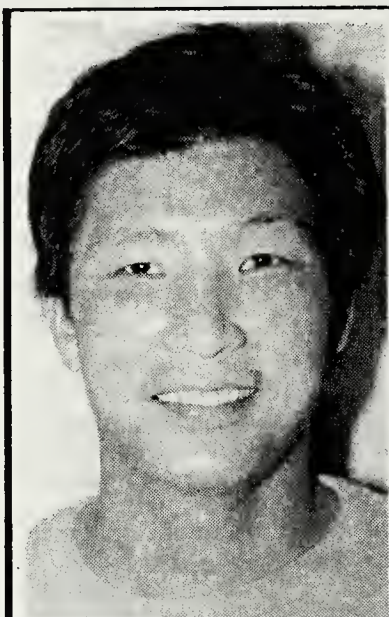
The silos were built to hold the first of a series of American InterContinental Ballistic Missile Weapons, but were only operational from 1962 to 1965. The sites form a ring, from Willsboro in the south, west to Sugarbush, north to Ellenburg and east through Champlain to Alburg and Swanton, Vt. They were deactivated in favor of a more advanced missile system.

At each site, a steel-and-concrete silo burrows 174 feet into the ground. Each site is connected by an access tunnel to an underground access center.

Park got involved with the idea in 1986 when he saw an article in the New York Times about the missile sites. He received a grant to study the sites, and created the competition.

"Part of (the Storefront's) program is projects — to initiate ideas and encourage people to participate," he said. "We look for different kinds of projects to interest artists, architects, and other people."

The results of Project Atlas will be on display at the Adirondack Center Museum in Elizabethtown until Aug. 16. Twenty-seven of the 140 projects



“We wanted participants to imagine the future and tell us about the future through a new artifact. (But) they also can't deny what the artifact says about the past.”

Myong Park

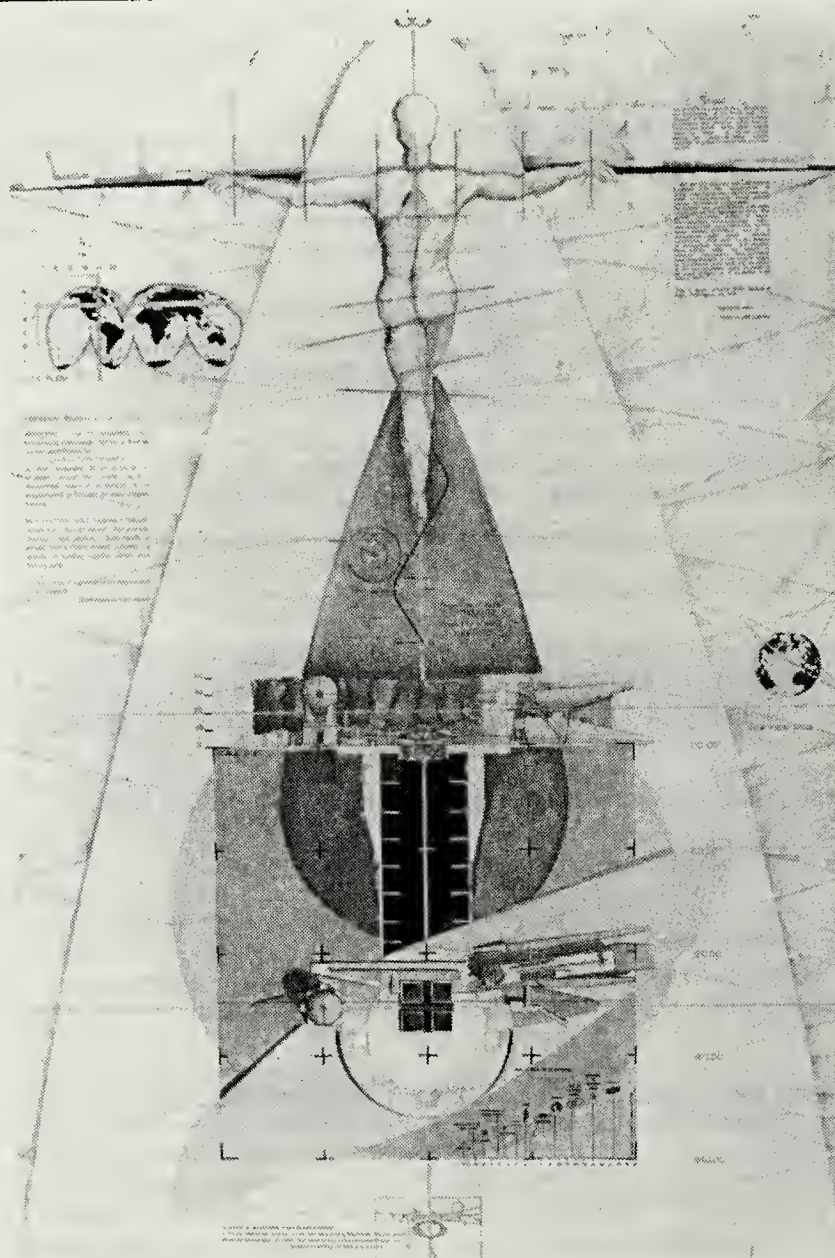
submitted were chosen for display. Many of the participants came from Australia, England and Japan, as well as the United States.

By altering, adding to or renovating the structures, the contestants sought to find uses for what had been deemed "obsolete."

"The main issue was to have (the participants) look at it as an artifact about society and a particular time," Park said.

"(The silos) are an emblem that represents a social state of a particular area — more specifically, military and political," he said. "These may be obsolete as well as the missiles themselves."

"We're in a state where the future is unknown," he said. "We wanted participants to imagine the future and tell us about the future through a new artifact. (But) they also can't deny what the artifact says about the past."



Staff Photo/Dayle Dermatis

Joey N. Shimodo of the Office of Original Zone conceived of using the Atlas missile sites as anchors for global tension rings. Each becomes "a heuristic device that denotes mental and physical distance and position," Shimodo wrote.

## Ideas: Theme parks to theater

By DAYLE DERMATIS  
Staff Writer

ELIZABETHTOWN — Most of the Project Atlas submissions were in the form of drawings and pictures. Some were three-dimensional. Two were videos. And the variety didn't stop there.

Nuclear Heritage Park, the tongue-in-cheek video submission from Pearson Post Industries, looks to have the potential to rival Disney World. Offering rides on missiles and a replica of the War Room at the Pentagon with everything going haywire, Nuclear Heritage Park also offers simulations where parkgoers can "experience the thrill of warfare in a safe environment."

Starling Keene's project "seeks to reveal the continuity of the present moment in the passing of actual time," by turning the silos in theaters, with benches inscribed with the history of the project.

Perhaps the silos could be turned into giant flute-like instruments, Shayne O'Neil suggested. "A series of acoustic stops, chambers and sound-evacuation conduits controls the passage of air upward, emitting low or high frequency sounds," said the description of his exhibit.

The silos could be transformed into a place of worship (Johannes Koops) or made into a solar electric power plant (J.P. Maruszczak) or an eclipse machine that artificially creates a solar eclipse every day in that area (Jean-Marc Ablarius and Christopher Burns).

Project Atlas will be on display at the Adirondack Center Museum until August 16. The museum is located on Court Street in Elizabethtown.